



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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## **Commercial Harvest of Blueline Tilefish in South Atlantic Waters Will Close on April 7, 2015**

Commercial harvest of blueline tilefish in South Atlantic waters will **close at 12:01 a.m. (local time) April 7, 2015**. On March 30, 2015, NOAA Fisheries published a final rule which reduced the blueline tilefish annual catch limit from 112,207 pounds whole weight to 17,841 pounds whole weight. Landing reports indicate the revised catch limit has been exceeded. Commercial harvest will reopen at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on January 1, 2016.

The operator of a vessel that has been issued a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper and who is landing blueline tilefish for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such blueline tilefish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, **April 7, 2015**. The prohibition on sale does not apply to sale or purchase of blueline tilefish that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m. (local time) **April 7, 2015**, and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

During the closure:

- Harvest or possession of blueline tilefish in or from federal waters is limited to the recreational bag and possession limits when the recreational sector is open. There is a recreational vessel limit of one blueline tilefish per vessel per day for the months of May through August. Recreational harvest is prohibited September through April, each year. Note that the recreational sector will not open in 2015 if recreational landings have reached, or are projected to reach, the recreational annual catch limit.
- Sale and purchase of blueline tilefish in or from federal waters is prohibited.
- The closure applies in both state and federal waters for a person onboard a vessel with a federal snapper-grouper permit.

This closure is necessary to protect the snapper-grouper resource.